

Winter 2011

# Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News



The Oregon Legislature established the Access and Habitat Program in 1993, funded primarily through a \$4 surcharge on hunting licenses and proceeds derived from deer and elk auction and raffle tags. The A&H Board, composed of members of the public, identifies and recommends funding for projects that improve wildlife habitat and facilitate public hunting access on private lands.

## A&H habitat projects continue to boost deer and elk habitat where it's needed most

Projects that restore or enhance habitat for deer and elk continue to be a major focus of Access and Habitat Program grants. Over the course of 2010, the A&H Program has provided \$782,375 in funding for 10 projects that benefit deer and elk through habitat improvement work on 53,575 acres of public and private land in eastern Oregon.

While mule deer projects may involve a range of habitat improvement remedies including noxious weed prevention and eradication, aspen restoration, spring development, riparian protection, fencing, and controlled burns, juniper management on winter range is a particular focus of mule deer habitat restoration efforts.

Although juniper is a native species, it has expanded its range on many deer and elk winter ranges and is increasingly becoming a problem.

In eastern Oregon, junipers were historically limited to the ridgelines and higher elevation areas of buttes and canyon rims. Frequent, low intensity wild fires kept them from becoming established in the lower elevation sagebrush and grassland steppe habitat. But human activities such as wild fire suppression, livestock grazing, and other factors allowed junipers to expand their range and out-compete other native shrubs, forbs, and grasses beneficial to wildlife, including mule deer and elk. This has resulted in degraded winter range habitat in many areas.

A number of projects were funded in 2010 that specifically target juniper for the purpose of improving mule deer and elk habitat. These include the Blue Mountains Elk Initiative, Murderers

Creek Winter Range Enhancement, Micke Ranch Wildlife Enhancement, Aspen Valley Habitat Improvement, Castle Canyon Winter Range Enhancement, Bennett Upland Enhancement, and Sullivan Z Ranch Habitat Improvement projects.

Removing these encroaching juniper forests, mainly by hand cutting, will allow the original native shrub-steppe plants to come back by reducing the competition they face for water, sunlight, and nutrients.

Many of these projects are on mule deer winter range, which is one of the priority habitat categories identified in the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Mule Deer Initiative, a plan to restore the state's declining mule deer population

back to management objectives, which would also increase the number of bucks available to hunters. These A&H projects dovetail with the Initiative's habitat improvement goals.

Many of these project areas support herds of elk and a variety of other game and non-game wildlife species that will benefit from the habitat improvement work.

Other 2010 A&H habitat projects include water developments to help better distribute deer and elk across the landscape and draw them away from agricultural lands, treat cheatgrass infested areas and replant with native grasses and forbs, and remove medusahead and reseed with plants more desirable for wildlife.



*Improving winter range for deer and elk is one of the priorities of Access and Habitat Program habitat projects.*

## A&H Raffle Hunt Tickets Available until May 9

There is still time to buy your 2011 A&H Raffle Hunt tickets that offer the opportunity to win elk and deer hunts during a three-month season across multiple wildlife management units while helping to improve future hunting opportunities throughout Oregon. Raffle proceeds go to the A&H Program to fund hunter access and wildlife habitat projects

Raffle hunt offerings for 2011 include a Governor's Statewide Deer and Elk Combination, Statewide Deer, Southeast Oregon Deer, Central Oregon Deer, Northeast Oregon Deer, Statewide Elk, Northeast Oregon Elk, Central/Southeast Oregon Elk, and Western Oregon Elk. Ticket prices vary depending on the species and package selected and include \$4.50 for individual deer tickets to \$101.50 for 100, \$6.50 for individual elk tickets to \$101.50 for 40, \$11.50 for single deer and elk combination tickets. Winning tickets will be drawn on May 21, 2011 at the Oregon Hunters Association Convention in Lincoln City.

Raffle tickets are available for purchase until May 9, 2012 through point of sale agents and from ODFW online or by mail order or fax. Tickets can also be hand-delivered to the OHA convention by 7:30 p.m. Additional information and an order form can be found at [www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/auctions\\_raffles/](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/resources/hunting/auctions_raffles/) and on pages 21-23 of the 2011 Oregon Big Game Regulations. Completed tickets must be returned to ODFW's Salem office by 5 p.m., May 19. Tickets may also be purchased at the OHA convention prior to the drawing.

The final A&H big game auction will feature a Statewide Deer tag and will be auctioned at the Oregon Hunters Association convention on May 21 at the Chinook Winds Casino in Lincoln City. For more information on bidding at the convention contact Duane Dungannon at (541) 772-7313.



*For the winner of an A&H auction or raffle tag, it can mean the hunt of a lifetime.*

### Oregon's Access and Habitat Board News is now Available Online!

To subscribe to our electronic mailing list, please visit:

**[www.dfw.state.or.us/AH](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/AH)**

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## Calendar of Events

### June 14

A&H Grant Applications Due  
503-947-6087

### July 25-26

A&H Board Meeting,  
Salem, 503-947-6087

### September 1\*

Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Meeting, Seaside  
503-947-6044

### October 17-18

A&H Board Meeting,  
Lakeview, 503-947-6087

\*Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings where A&H business is being conducted.

## Have an idea for an A&H project?

If you have an idea for a project that increases public hunting access to private lands and/or improves wildlife habitat, contact the A&H Regional Coordinator nearest you for advice and assistance on applying for an A&H grant.

### Northwest Region

Dave Nuzum, Tillamook 503-842-2741  
Jim Young, Corvallis 541-757-4186

### Southwest Region

Vince Oredson, 541-826-8774  
Central Point

### High Desert Region

Larry Pecenka, Bend 541-388-6444  
Meg Eden, Prineville 541-447-5111  
Tom Segal, Hines 541-573-6582

### Northeast Region

Jon Paustian, La Grande 541-962-1838

## A&H on the Web

**[www.dfw.state.or.us/AH](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/AH)**



# F&W Commission approves A&H projects keeping 82,000 acres of private land open to public hunting

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved 8 Access and Habitat Program projects at its March 17 meeting that will keep 82,474 acres of private lands in eastern Oregon open to public hunting for the next three to five years. The total cost is \$857,609 and involves per acre payments to landowners to allow public hunting access on their properties.

The **Pine Creek Ranch** received a \$180,004 grant to provide Welcome to Hunt access to 14,167 acres of private land from August 1 to March 1 each year for five years. In addition, \$10,000 of the grant will be used to install two cattle guards on the property. The ranch is located in the Malheur Wildlife Management Unit and offers hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, predators, and upland game birds, including sage grouse.

The **Fox Valley Access Area** received a \$7,317 grant to open 1,355 acres of private land to public hunting access from August 1 to January 31 each year for three years. Located within the Northside Wildlife Management Unit, the property provides hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, wild turkey, upland game birds, and predators.

A \$23,010 grant to the **M.R. King Ranches** will provide three years of public hunting access on 3,835 acres of private lands within the Lookout Mountain and Sumpter wildlife management units from August 1 to January 31 of each year. This will add important hunting opportunities in these two wildlife management units where access to public lands can be difficult. Hunting opportunities on this property include mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, bear, upland birds, and predators.

Three years of open hunting access to 5,696 acres of the **Troy Ranches** will be made available from August 1 to January 31 each year with a grant of \$34,641. In addition, the property also provides access to 1,797 acres of public lands surrounded by private lands and otherwise inaccessible to hunters. The property is located within the Lookout Mountain and Sumpter wildlife management units and provides hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, upland birds, and predators.

The **Rufenacht Access Area** received a \$5,670 grant to expand its existing public access agreement with the A&H Program by 472.5 acres for a total of 5,199 acres of access for five years. The property is located in the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit, where only 45% of the unit is public lands. The property supports populations of mule deer, elk, pronghorn, wild turkey, upland game birds, and predators.

Five ranch owners near Heppner received a total of \$475,490 to keep their properties enrolled in the **Heppner Regulated Hunt Area** for five more years. The 39,624-acre area provides year-round open public access for hunting, fishing and other recreational activities. Located within the Heppner Wildlife

Management Area, hunting opportunities include mule deer, elk, pronghorn, upland game birds, wild turkey, and predators.

The **Iron Mountain Access Area**, located within the Lookout Mountain Wildlife Management Unit, received a \$60,335 grant to offer Welcome to Hunt access from August 1 to January 31 each year for five years on 3,342 acres of private land. This property also provides access to 4,215 acres of public lands previously landlocked by private lands and inaccessible to the public. Hunting opportunities include mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, upland game birds, and predators.

## 2 new A&H habitat projects approved

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission also approved two new Access and Habitat habitat improvement projects at its March 17 meeting. These include:

An \$11,575 grant to Robert Thomas for the **Thomas Sage Steppe Habitat Management** project to improve upland game bird and big game habitat, including for sage grouse and mule deer. The project would remove invasive non-native plants such as medusahead and yellow starthistle. In addition, water troughs would be installed on the property to provide additional water sources for wildlife. Benefits of this project include improving critical big game winter range and upland game bird habitat through enhancing forage and cover, and providing access to water in an area that is naturally water limited. The property is located on the Keating Wildlife Management Unit.

Al and Dan Luttrell have received a \$37,360 grant for the **Logan Butte Habitat Improvement** project, which will improve important mule deer winter range in the Maury Wildlife Management Unit by removing 300 acres of juniper to spur growth of native grasses, herbs, and shrubs, develop three spring sites to provide wildlife with additional water sources, and fence a one-acre stand of aspen to protect it from overgrazing by wild ungulates and livestock. In addition to mule deer, elk will also benefit from the project.

Access and Habitat Board  
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 3406 Cherry Avenue, N.E.  
 Salem, OR 97303-4924



For information on applying for an Access and Habitat Program grant contact A&H Program Coordinator Matt Keenan at 3406 Cherry Avenue N.E., Salem, OR 97303-4924, 503-947-6087

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